THE FIGHTER

BY ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE thor of "Caleb Conover, Railroader," "Dr. Dale," "On Glory's Trail," etc.

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(Continued from Page 8.)

aurmured Desiree. "I seem to be in a larriess where no ill can ever get to me. I'm home!"

He wrapped the coat more closely about her and held her tenderly as a mother, reverently as a priest might cear the Host. And after a time, as one lay against his broad breast, the long curling fringe of her eyelashes began to waver. Sleepily she lifted her face.

"Kiss me good night," she said, her voice slow with drowsiness.

The fire died down and the ring of heat-ramparts it had reared against the autumn cold crumbled away. The sleeping girl rested cozily warm in Conover's arms. The man, his back against the tree, sat motionless; fearing by the slightest move to disturb

He dared not rise to replenish the amouldering fire. He was coatless and the growing cold gnawed with increasing keenness through the thin negligee shirt, into his arms and shoulders. It was the coldest night he had known cince his arrival at the

As the last flame died down upon the as the last name died down upon the ed of red-gray coals, Rex woke with quiver of chilliness, crept close to seembers and lay down again. Caleb, ret making sure the movement had of disturbed Desiree, fell to envying the dog. The cold had sank into his transfer languages the impossibility of shift. very bones. The impossibility of shift-ing his stilted position galled him, as the endless hours crept by. Cramped. half frozen, racked with the agony of stiffening muscles and of blood that could no longer circulate, he clenched

night through.

At length his body grew numb, his bodd congested. Aching discomfort and cold had wrought their worst on his frame of iron and had left it hard-

is frame of iron and had left it hardly impervious to further ill. His
hind, when bodily surcease came,
woke to new activity. His thoughts,
it first disjointed and wonderingly
appy, settled down soon to their
wonted sharp clearness. Then it was
ne coolly weighed this thing he had It was like him to array in battle-

were.

First,—his own social yearnings, his golden dreams of a secure place within the inner charmed circle of Granke society! The only road of ingress had been through marriage with a daughter of that circle. Preferably with Letty Standish. Now all that was out of the question. Desiree herself was popular. But he knew she could not drag up to social prominence a man

popular. But he knew she could not drag up to social prominence a man like himself. She had not family nor other prestige for such a tremendous uplift. Nor, as she herself had said, did she value such position.

Had she married Hawarden, Caine or any of a half dozen other eligible Grante men. Desiree's own place in society would straightway have become more than assured. With Conover as a husband, she must take rank—or lack of rank—with him. Nothing higher could be in store for her. Forever, Caleb must assail the circle in vain, or else sink back contant with his own lot far outside its radius. ot far outside its radius.

The very fact that he was married.

The very fact that he was married,—and married to an outsider who would not second his attack,—would render the walls of society impregnable against him. As a single man,—with money and with the power to use the money as a battering ram,—he had already knocked great breaches in the fortifications. Now he could never pass triumphant through those gaps.

A life-ambition,—all compelling even if inworthy of a strong man,—was wilfully to be foregone. He, who had ever fought with all that was within him for the gratification of his few desires, must now forever abandon the carliest and greatest of them all. On the very eve of his career's most complete victory he must forever lay aside the sword.

between his blue-cold lips. The sound made the girl stir ever so slightly in her sleep. Caleb glanced down in alarm, dreading lest he had broken her alarm, dreading lest he had broken her slumber. There, against his arm rested Desiree's upturned face. The dark silken lashes lay peacefully above the sleep-flushed cheeks. She was so little, so helpless, so wonderful, to the eyes bending above her! Inexpressibly precious to him always; a thousand-fold more so, now, in the hour of his renunciation of all else for love of her.

wave of undreamed-of tenderness A wave of undreamed-of tenderness swept over Conover; possessing him to the utter extinction of every other thought of passion; sweeping away in its headlong rush all vestige of doubts and regrets. In an instant of blinding soul-light he saw once and for all the futility of what he had abandoned; the Godgiven marvel of what he had won in its place.

Godgiven marvel of what he had won in its place.

The battle was over. Caleb Conover had lost—and won. In his heart he knew he was no longer the Fighter; no more a seeker for Dead-Sea Fruit. His battles, social and financial, were at an end. This coming clash at the Legislature,—this mission on which Desiree was dispatching him, her true knight to save the fortunes of others,—should be his last field. After that, a new, strange peace!—and Desiree!

Defiantly, Conover glared out into the night, beyond the smoking remnant of the fire; as though challenging the ghosts of slain ambitions to rise again before him that he might confound them all by merely pointing at the girl who slept in his arms. She—the mere sight of her—should be his reply to their tsunts.

Something in his own look or attitude

nething in his own look or attitude

Something in his own look or attitude stirred a latent chord of memory. He recalled, by an odd turn of thought, a double-page drawing in one of the English weeklies that he had long ago seen at Desiree's:—

A rocky hillrock whereon sat a man clad in skins;—in his arms an unconscious woman whose long hair streamed over her loose robe;—confronting the twain a shadowy, armired goddess into whose commanding eyes the skin-clad man was staring with an awed courage torn of deperation. Beneath the picture were the lines:

born of deperation. Beneath the picture were the lines:

"So grusse mir Walhall! Grusse mir Watan! Grusse mir Walse und alle Helden! Zu ihnen folg' ich dir nicht!"

Desiree had translated the words for Caleb. She had told him the pictured man was Siegmund; who, pausing in his flight to a place of refuge, with the fainting Sieglinde whom he loved, beheld the Valkyr. Brunhilde, and was told by her that a hero's death and a hero's reward in Valhalla were in store for him. There in the Viking Paradise, waited the warrior-parent he had lost; there Wotan the All-Father would welcome him. The Valkyries were preparing his place. The heroes of olden days would be his boon companions.

And Siegmund, the Luckless, heard with joy. But one question he asked

the goddess:-Would Sieglinde, his felfugitive, join him in the abode of blest? Brunhilde scoffingly replied the blest? Brunhilde scoffingly replied that Valhalla was for heroes; not for that Valhalla was for heroes; not for mere women. Then, unflinchingly casting aside his every hope of Paradise, Siegmund kissed the senseless woman's brow; and again facing the goddess, made answer:

"Greet for me Valhalla! Greet for me Wotan! Greet for me my father and all the heroes! To them, I'll follow thee not! Where Sieglinde bides.

and all the heroes: To them, I'll follow thee not! Where Sieglinde bides, there shall Siegmund stay."

Caleb at the time had been but mildly interested in the tale. The fact that Desiree could translate such queerlooking words was to him the most notworthy feature of the whole affair. noteworthy feature of the whole affair. Now, with a whimsical comparison to his own case, the incident recurred to

Was he not, like Siegmund, keeping watch and ward in the wilderness over the unconscious woman of his heart? Was not the Brunhilde of ambition standing there somewhere in the mys tic star-shadows before him, pointing out all that might be his were he to renounce love? And was he not mak-ing reply as defiantly, if perhaps not in quite such highflown terms, as had that Dutch chap in the bearskin

that Dutch chap clothes? The idea tickled Conover's torpid imagination; he dwelt upon it with some pride at his own powers of anal-ogy. Then he fell to dreaming of his vast new happiness, of the golden vista that stretched before him and Desiree. And again a wonder, almost holy, fill-

The night voices ceased. Brunhilde. piqued at such unwonted obstinacy from one who had ever heretofore been her slave, had scuttled back to Valhalla in a fine fit of rage; leaving this latter day Siegmund and Sieglinde to their own foolish, self-chosen fate. The cold pressed in more and more cruelly as the night waned. It plerced at times through Caleb's numbness. He had great ado to keep his teeth from chattering so loudly as to wake the exhausted girl on his breast. The stars grew him. The dawn wind breathed across the sky. A paleness crept over the eastern horizon of the fog-sea. The man's heavy head nod-ded;—one—and again,—then hung still.

With a sensation of being stared at, rom one who had ever heretofore beer

could no longer circulate, he clenched his teeth over his underlip from sheer pain. The girl, who at first had lain feather-like in his arms, now seemed heavy enough to tear loose his throbbing biceps. Nor would he, for all the physical, anguish of his plight, move her body one hair's breadth.

And so, like a sleepless Galahad before some old world forest shrine,—like Stylites on his pillar—worshipping yet in infinite suffering,—he sat the long night through.

At length his body grew numb, his blood congested. Aching discomfort and cold had wrought their worst on and cold had wrought their worst on the far side of the dead fire Jack Hawarden stood eyeing them. And his face was as gray and as life-

And his face was as gray and as life-less as the strewn ashes at his feet. Conover and the lad looked at each other without speaking. Long and expressionlessly Jack gazed at the waking and the sleeping. Conover poted that the boy's eyes were hag-gard and that the youth and jollity had been stricken from his face as by a blow. It was Hawarden who spoke

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FOR NEY YORK—*4:44, \$*5:16, 15:43, 16:24, 17:17, *7:48, 18:25, *8:51, 9:06, *10:00, *11:05 A. M.—*12:28, *1:49, *2:27, 8:00, *4:13, 5:07, *5:27, 6:12, *6:29, *7:22, *8:11, *9:27, 9:48 P. M.—SUNDAYS—*4:44, *5:18, 18:25, \$10:00 A. M.—†12:10, *2:22, *2:27, *4:13, 5:07, *5:27, †6:45, *7:22, *8:11, *9:27, 9:42 P. M.

FOR BOSTON, via Hartford and Willipantic-9:21 A. M.-93:29 P.

M. FOR WINSTED and Intermediate Stations—5:00, 7:00, 9:35 †11:40 A.M. —2:35, *5:51, 7:40 P. M.—SUNDAYS —8:30 A. M.—6:45 P. M. FOR WATERBURY, ANSONIA, DERBY and Intermediate Stations—5:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:35, 11:40 A. M.—2:35, †5:54, 7:40 P. M.—SUNDAYS—8:30, 10:50 A. M.—6:45, 8:50 P. M. FOR GT. RARRINGTON, LENDY.

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